

CLAIMS:

1. A device for delivering a surgical implant, which comprises:
a guide track for guiding the movement of a spinal implant to an implantation site of a patient;
an implant carrier for engaging an implant in the guide track and which can move along the guide track in order to deliver the implant to the implantation site, the carrier including a displaceable connector which can be displaced between a connected position in which the implant is connected to the carrier to move with it in the guide track, and a disconnected position in which the implant can be separated from the carrier;
a driving device which can engage the implant carrier to move the carrier and an implant which engages the carrier along the track; and
a formation which causes the displaceable connector on the implant carrier to be displaced from the connected position to the disconnected position when the carrier reaches a pre-determined position relative to the guide track, to allow the implant to be released from the device for implantation.
2. A device as claimed in claim 1, in which the formation is located at or towards the end of the guide track from which the implant is delivered.
3. A device as claimed in claim 1, in which the connector is pivotably connected to the implant carrier.
4. A device as claimed in claim 1, in which the guide track includes a recess in it into which the connector can be displaced to allow it to be disconnected from the implant.
5. A device as claimed in claim 1, in which the formation comprises a ramp.
6. A device as claimed in claim 1, in which the driving device is manually operated.
7. A device as claimed in claim 1, in which the implant carrier comprises a toothed rack, and the driving device includes a drive pin or the like to engage with the rack.

8. A device as claimed in claim 1, in which the driving device includes a housing in which driving components are housed.
9. A device as claimed in claim 7, in which the housing is separable into at least two separate portions to allow access to its interior for cleaning purposes.
10. A device as claimed in claim 1, in which the driving device includes at least one driver lever for causing movement of the implant carrier in the guide track.
11. An assembly which comprises a device for delivering a surgical implant as claimed in claim 1, and a surgical implant fitted within the guide track.
12. An assembly as claimed in claim 11, in which the surgical implant is formed from a shape memory alloy.
13. An assembly as claimed in claim 11, in which the surgical implant can revert from a deformed configuration which it adopts while in the guide track and an in-use configuration which it adopts once discharged from the guide track.
14. An assembly as claimed in claim 13, in which the configuration of the implant when in use is curved and the configuration of the implant when deformed for implantation is essentially straight.
15. An assembly as claimed in claim 11, in which the surgical implant is a spinal implant to be fitted between two vertebrae.
16. An assembly as claimed in claim 11, in which one of the implant and the connector on the carrier has a dove-tail shape at its end, and the other has a recess in which the dove-tail shape can be received.